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AUTHOR Cote, Lawrence S.
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ABSTRACT

The extent of agreement expressed by college presidents and governing board chairpersons concerning the relative importance of 20 selected presidential roles was assessed. The variables of institution size and type were also examined as they related to perceived presidential role importance. Based on role theory, attention was directed to whether "role dissensus" exists between presidents (actors) and governing board chairpersons (significant others). Basic role functions claimed by H. Mintzberg to be generic to all managers were incorporated in the research instrument, the Presidential Roles Profile. Questionnaires were completed by 239 college presidents and board chairpersons from Pennsylvania colleges and universities. Presidents and board chairpersons did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the relative importance of 20 presidential roles described in the research instrument. There were preliminary indications that institution type may be a critical variable affecting the relative importance of the array of presidential roles. For 14 of the 20 roles, there were no differences in the overall high level of consensus among the two groups of leaders based on institution size. Findings based on unstructured, written comments by some of the respondents are also considered. (SW)

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Presidential Roles: A Comparative Analysis of their Relative Importance as Perceived by College and University Presidents and Governing Board Chairpersons

Lawrence S. Cote

Temple University

The Pennsylvania State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Running head: PRESIDENTIAL ROLES

Abstract

Although much has been written about the academic presidency and the sometimes tumultuous relationship between presidents and governing boards, little empirical research has been undertaken to investigate the topic. This study investigated to what extent institution presidents and governing board chairpersons agreed about the relative importance of twenty selected presidential roles. The variables of institution size and type were also examined as they related to perceived presidential role importance.

Presidential Roles: A Comparative Analysis of their Relative Importance as Perceived by College and University Presidents and Governing Board Chairpersons

The Embattled College Presidency

The third page headline read, "Auburn President Quits After Year of Faculty Unrest" [5]. A picture of President Funderburk's expressionless, blankly staring face was placed below the headline, next to a picture of students celebrating his resignation. Smaller headings on the previous page read, "President Quits at Shaw College" and "Union Condemns President at Indiana U. of Pa." Of the Auburn University case, it was reported that

> at no point during the more than a year of unrest did leaders of the faculty's anti-Funderburk faction explain in other than general terms why they found the president objectionable. He was accused of lacking "a vision" for the university, of harboring "anti-intellectual attitudes," and of allowing purely budgetary concerns to dominate his administration of the university.
>
> In his letter of resignation, Mr. Funderburk reminded the trustees that they had asked him when he took the job to "straighten out the financial affairs of the university, establish a goal and initiate a capital campaign fund, and

correct fiscal and personnel problems in the athletic department."

"You will find that I have accomplished these assignments," he said. [5]

The article followed weeks of headline-grabbing reporting on the case. Six months prior a president of a Pennsylvania state college, fired by the state's Governor after the Governor was allegedly pressured to do so by an embittered former employee of the college--then an influencial state legislator, had held the dubious limelight of national attention in the higher education community [6].

Seven years before the Auburn and West Chester incidents, a front page story appeared in a February, 1975, issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, entitled, "The Perilous Presidencies." It detailed a series of presidential firings and resignations which had occurred the previous year. This phenomenon has become alarmingly commonplace. "More and more heads of colleges and universities find their assignments increasingly precarious. . . . presidents appear to be facing increased pressures from various campus constituencies, especially faculties and boards of trustees" [37,p.1]. The embattled American college presidency remains under seige, frought with conflicting expectations from the institutions' many publics, internal and external.

The Need for Empirical Research on Presidential Roles

The academic presidency has been the subject of concern and analysis for many years as has--to a lesser extent--the sometimes tumultuous relationship between presidents and lay governing boards. The work of Stoke [39], Corson [13], Dodds [15], Simon [38], Mayhew [29], Kerr [27], Cohen and March [11], Cleary [10], Ingram [22,23], Nason [33], Carbone [9], Peck [34], and particularly Kauffman [26,24,25], provide a representative continuum of approaches to the topic.

A variety of barriers have frustrated many previous attempts to accumulate and analyze meaningful data related to this topic. The unique nature of the academic environment [11,3], the ambiguity which has characterized functions of the collegiate presidency [17,8,24,43,33], the extreme diversity among institutions [3], the absence of a coherent history of empirical research on the topic [17,25], and the lack of theoretical constructs to assist in the design of such studies are representative of those barriers. For these reasons this study should be considered exploratory--in terms of both the research instrument developed for use in the study and the implications of the findings.

The opinion literature offers many useful subjective observations about the nature of the presidency but few conclusions grounded in data. The widely-publicized history of embattled presidencies implies possible lack of consensus among presidents and

trustees, at least in terms of successful fulfillment of presidential expectations, but the limited data-based evidence is mixed and incomplete--particularly regarding perceptions of presidential role priorities.

Study Objectives

The major objective of the present study was to investigate whether consensus exists concerning the relative importance of selected presidential roles as perceived by governing board chairpersons and presidents of American colleges and universities. The variables of institution size and type were also examined as they related to perceived presidential role importance. Furthermore, because some observers have described the president's role as two-dimensional--those activities or role functions directed to collegiate issues, concerns and constituencies "inside" the institution and those directed "outside" the institution--this study also investigated whether or not discrepancies exist among the two groups of leaders in their perceptions of the relative importance of these two dimensions.

Role Ambiguity and Conflicting Expectations

The job of president of an American college or university is multi-faceted. Expectations for how a president should function and which of many presidential roles should be emphasized abound and vary with the many constituencies served by the president [2,27]. As Wenrich has observed:

> Many of the difficulties associated with the presidency have to do with opposing demands. The president simultaneously seeks to serve and attend to the needs and interests of students, faculty, other administrators, trustees, business/industrial groups, and the community at large. The position is enshrouded with ambiguity, which serves as a defense machanism against the many and varied groups and individuals who seek something from the institution. At the same time the undefined nature of the position breeds considerable uneasiness in many presidents. [43,p.37]

The problem of multiple demands for role function is coupled with the related problem of role ambiguity and further complicated by the complexity of the academic organization itself [7]. Cohen and March's [11] well-known "organized anarchy" characterization of such institutions provides an adequate, if unsettling, description of the milieu in which these institutional leaders find themselves. In spite of this rather pessimistic but popular view of academic institutional life, the president remains an individual who is filling a position of grand proportions. A decade ago, Cohen and March admitted that:

> The presidency is heroic. Whatever terms are used, the role is seen as an important one. The president is the man who acts, or guides, or divides, or supports, the man who is--in some sense or other--responsible for the institution.[11,p.79]

Kauffman has agreed: "Whatever else we may think about presidents, they do seem to be necessary." [24,p.7]

It is against this backdrop of institutional complexity and role ambiguity that this research effort focused on one significant constituency key to the function of the presidency: the governing board of trustees as represented by the board chairperson. Among the multitude of presidential role expectations none would seem so critical as those held by governing board chairpersons in comparison with the role expectations of the position incumbents.

As the institution's executive officer, the president is linked directly and conspicuously to the governing board and particularly its chairperson. Because the relationship is so critical, it seems to follow that there ought to be a substantial amount of agreement between trustees and the president as to the relative importance of roles representative of the president's major work activity areas.

Overview of related literature. Much of the early literature on the presidency is based on anecdotal recollections of former college and university presidents. Twing's [40] book is representative of this type, as is Lowell's [28], also published in the late thirties. This type of essay has also appeared in the more contemporary literature, as evidenced by Auburn's [1] article of the early seventies. This genre was generally imprecise, highly subjective and personal in its tone and often portrayed presidents in mythological proportions.

There is another, more recent, trend in the literature wherein commentators have suggested that analysis of the president's activities and responsibilities should proceed in terms of the external and internal dichotomy inherent to the position. Millett [31] has been a major proponent of this view.

There is a considerable volume of literature which has attempted to describe the presidency in terms of its many, somewhat distinct, roles. "Visionary/long range planner" has been identified by many as a primary presidential role. Prator [36], Simon [38], Meyerson [30], Howe [20], Walker [42], Wenrich [43], Cowley [14], Kauffman [24], and Hesburgh [19] all refer to it from a variety of perspectives. Other roles, such as financial manager, administrator/decision-maker, fund raiser, faculty advocate, government liaison, academic innovator have been hypothesized by these and other writers. But, as Kauffman has aptly observed, "One person's 'leader-visionary' is another person's 'autocrat-wildman'. . . . We see how difficult it is to describe the role of president and the conflicting role expectations of each beholder" [25,p.14-17].

Substantive, data-based literature related specifically to the president-board chairperson relationship is almost nonexistent. The best available literature on this topic is the be found in portions of articles or books or pamphlets which usually only address the relationship in a somewhat simplified, subjective, fashion without

reference to data. Examples are provided by the pamphlets published by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (A.G.B.) entitled, The Board Chairperson and the President [16,35]. Although helpful, the issues discussed are typically not the tough, substantive ones related to board members assisting presidents define and evaluate their jobs and be more successful at them.

Previous empirical studies. Data-based analysis of the academic presidency has occurred but in a limited way. For example, a few studies have analyzed the presidential roles in terms of "time-on-task." Walberg's [41] study of presidents and their secretaries, conducted in 1966 in New York State, produced a description of four major work activity areas of presidents, including an analysis of the precentage of presidential time spent on various tasks. In a similar study, Benezet, Katz, and Magnusson [4] reported that, based on data gathered between 1976-79, the president "rarely concentrates only on budgetary and political aspects of the role. Most presidents aspire to be leaders in education as well" [4,p.9].

Cole [12], Kauffman [25], and Carbone [9] represent the few researchers who have gathered data for the purpose of examining the general nature of frustrations experienced by many college and university presidents. In his study of thirty-nine presidents who had resigned their position during the 1975-76 academic year, Cole reported that twenty-two said they had resigned in a crisis

situation. Of that group, seventeen, or 77 percent, reported difficulties with their governing boards [12,p.72].

In 1976, Kauffman interviewed thirty-two recently appointed male and female presidents, representing mixed public and private institutions from eighteen states, for two to four hours each in an open-ended interview format. These presidents reported overwhelming role demands, lack of trustee involvement and support as well as, in most cases, "no agreed upon objectives or criteria [for presidential job performance]. . . . There is nothing in writing that describes the role of presidents" [26,p.167]. Examining presidents' views at the end of their careers, Carbone [9], based on a 1979 survey among 1400 immediate past presidents, found that "in most cases, the trouble experienced by presidents seems to arise from governing boards rather than faculty" [9,p.47].

In a study reported in 1980, Cleary [10] focused on areas of agreement or disagreement among institution presidents and governing board chairpersons on specific issues (such as academic program changes, long range planning, dormitory regulations, budgeting, and tenure limits). In an exploratory attempt to investigate the topic, based on a sixteen item questionnaire sent to 213 presidents and board chairpersons (57 percent responding), Cleary reported that "trustees and presidents comment again and again that the authority relationship joining them is often so unclear that maximum joint effort . . . is required to ensure success" [10,p.157].

Conceptual framework: role theory. Basic to the design of this study is the assumption that role theory provides a conceptual vehicle through which behavior in organizations may be understood better and predicted: ". . . a large part of the variance in interpersonal relations and organizational functioning can be understood in terms of interactions among persons as occupants of positions and players of roles" [21,p.288]. Role theorists define a number of situations associated with "role-playing" which are related to problematic role interactions or fulfillment (such as "role strain" due to "role conflict," "role overload", and lack of consensus between actors and significant others) [18,p.117].

The focus of the present study was to investigate whether "role dissensus" exists between presidents (actors) and governing board chairpersons (significant others). "Role theory is clear in its implications regarding the consequences of role dissensus. If it is not removed, the interaction is unlikely to proceed smoothly and satisfactorily" [18,p.120].

Mintzberg [19] seems to have contributed the most useful adaptation of role theory to research concerning the nature of managerial work. Based on structured observation of five executives (one week of observation per subject) representing a variety of business and service organizations, Mintzberg developed a ten role set he hypothesized describes managers' jobs of all types and at all levels.

The present study assumes general agreement with the utility of Mintzberg's conceptualization of managerial work with a few adaptations seemingly required by the unique characteristics of the academic organization. The ten basic role functions claimed by Mintzberg to be generic to all managers are represented in the research instrument developed for use in the present study. To an extent, the present study is an exploratory attempt to operationalize Mintzberg's managerial work role theory.

METHODOLOGY

The Survey Instrument

Based or an extensive literature review and interviews with three presidents and two governing board chairpersons (representing five different postsecondary institutions in the Philadelphia area), a survey instrument--the Presidential Roles Profile--was developed. It named and described, in random order, a twenty role set intended to represent a concise but generalized, generic description of the major work activity areas, or roles, fulfilled by most college and university presidents.

The instrument provided respondents with five Likert-scale response alternatives (from "1"--very important to "5"--very unimportant) whereby presidents and board chairpersons rated each presidential role in terms of their perception of how important that role should be to their institution during the 1982-83 academic year. Open-ended responses were also solicited.

Content validity was established primarily through review of the instrument draft by a panel of seventeen individuals expert in the areas of presidential activity and board-president relationships. The instrument was tested during a pilot study (test-retest procedure) conducted among presidents and board chairpersons of twenty-eight New Jersey postsecondary institutions (ten state colleges, eighteen community colleges). The Spearman Rank-Difference Correlation Coefficient of .98 (using ranked mean values for each role for the test responses and retest responses) suggested that the ratings given each role on the test remained virtually the same, in relation to each other, on the retest.

Data Source

The data were gathered from the institution presidents and governing board chairpersons of the 129 Pennsylvania college and universities included in the study. The study sample included all "comparable" institutions (e.g. all non-profit postsecondary institutions having a "typical" board-president governance structure) licensed by the state to grant degrees and based in Pennsylvania.

Data Collection

Each of the 258 institution leaders (129 presidents, 129 board chairpersons) was mailed an individually typed, personally addressed and signed cover letter along with the survey instrument on February 15, 1982. The letter was typed on Temple University letterhead and

indicated (as did the survey instrument) that the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities (AGB) and Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities (PACU) were aware of the study and results would be shared with those organizations. The initial mailing packet also included a stamped return envelope and a brief memorandum from Marvin Wachman, former president of PACU and two Pennsylvania universities, urging participation. A similar memorandum urging participation in the study, from James Gallagher, Pennsylvania Commissioner of Higher Education, was sent to the sample one week prior to the initial mailout.

One week following the initial mailing, an individually signed postcard reminder was mailed to all who had not responded. Three weeks following the initial mailout, a slightly more strongly worded letter, replacement questionnaire and stamped, return envelope was mailed to nonrespondents. The third and final follow-up procedure, mailed five weeks after the initial mailout, was a certified mail letter, replacement questionnaire and return envelope.

All questionnaires were coded to reflect the respondent type (president or board chairperson), six institution types (state related [public], n = 4; state "owned" [public], n = 14; state aided [generally private] n = 12; public community colleges, n = 14; private junior colleges, n = 9; private colleges and universities, n = 76), and institution size, as determined by Fall, 1982, reported FTE enrollment. Of 258 questionnaires mailed, 243 completed and

usable questionnaires were returned for an overall response rate of 91 percent. Of the 234 questionnaires returned, 49 percent were from governing chairpersons and 51 percent from presidents.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS

Relative Role Importance: Overall Perceptions

Presidents and board chairpersons did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the relative importance of the twenty presidential roles described in the survey instrument. The Spearman Coefficient of .96, based on a comparison of the pairings of presidents and board chairpersons by institution where the value means for each group were rank ordered, one to twenty, suggested a very high level of consensus among the two groups of leaders regarding the perceived overall relative importance of the roles (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 here

As a supportive analysis, the application of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation formula to institutionally matched pairs of respondents for each of the twenty roles indicated no significant pattern of response, either in agreement or disagreement, for fifteen of the roles. The five roles for which there were significant positive correlation coefficients (see Table 1: Fund Raiser, Community Leader, Government Liaison/Resource Stimulator,

Physical Plant/Property Overseer, Labor Relations Specialist) exhibited moderately weak levels of agreement and correlated response patterns. This seemed to indicate that while the groups agreed strongly on the relative importance of the twenty roles, their response patterns pertaining to specific importance values assigned to most of the individual roles were not correlated.

Interestingly, four of the five roles for which moderately weak agreement was detected were relatively lower rated roles. This suggested that there may have been greater consensus among the two groups of leaders on less important roles. But the limited variance in responses suggested that this was a tentative conclusion at best.

Finally, as another supportive statistical analysis, t tests were applied to the data for each of the twenty roles (see Table 2). Measuring differences between the groups on the degree of perceived importance for each role, this analysis suggested no significant differences for most roles (sixteen of twenty). Presidents did perceive three roles (Trustee Rapport Builder/Advisor, Financial Manager, Community Leader) to be significantly more important than did trustees and trustees perceived the Labor Relations Specialist role to be significantly more important than did presidents.

Insert Table 2 here

The respondents also tended to rate in a correlated pattern two

of the four roles upon which the two groups disagreed on degree of importance (Community Leader, Labor Relations Specialist). Furthermore, three of the four roles upon which there was significant disagreement about degree of importance were ranked among the top rated 60 percent of the twenty role set. This offered limited but additional support to the tentative conclusion cited earlier that presidents and trustees tended to exhibit more consensus on lower rated roles.

Relative Role Importance: Institution Size as a Variable

For the majority of presidential roles (fourteen of twenty), there were no differences in the overall high level of consensus among the two groups of leaders based on institution size. As Table 3 indicates, correlation coefficients indicate that for two of the six roles (Educational Advocate, Government Liaison/Resource Stimulator, ranked by presidents ten and fourteen in overall importance, respectively) where differences based on institution size were noted, the differences in perceived importance based on institution size were matched in both respondent groups. Thus, presidents and chairpersons agreed that these two roles were of greater overall importance as institution size increased.

Board chairpersons from larger institutions tended to view the Community Leader role (ranked thirteen in overall importance) as more important than trustees from smaller institutions but presidents did not exhibit any significant differences based on

institution size. Similarly, presidents exhibited no differences based on institution size relative to the roles of Administrator/ Executive or Consensus Builder/Mediator (ranked six and seven in overall importance, respectively) although board chairpersons tended to perceive both roles as more important as institution size decreased. Finally, board chairpersons exhibited no differences concerning the Faculty Advocate role (ranked nine in overall importance) although presidents tended to view the role as more important as institution size increased.

This pattern offered limited further evidence that presidents and board chairpersons exhibit greater consensus on the perceived importance of roles less highly rated overall.

Insert Table 3 here

Relative Role Importance: Institution Type as a Variable

A One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed for each of the twenty presidential roles for all presidents' responses, then all board chairpersons responses, testing separately within group significance of differences, if any, between mean role importance ratings based on institution type. Where significant F values were obtained: (1) it suggested that there did exist a significant difference between the perceived role importance based on institution type, (2) a post hoc comparison, Student-Newman-Keuls,

was applied to determine the means between which significant differences existed.

The number of institutions and respondents represented within various institution types was quite small in some cases thus, analysis and conclusions about those institution types should be considered very tentative. Although illuminating as an exploratory effort, the statistical results shown in Table 4 must be interpreted in light of the observation that for use of the ANOVA in comparing institutions by type, the range and cell size posed a problem. This also prevented the researcher from statistically measuring the possible interactive effect of the variables institution size and type. The possibility thus exists that the analyses may be confounding.

Given these constraints, there were a variety of significant differences in perceived presidential role importance based on institution type in the case of ten of the twenty roles. As shown in Table 4, for three of the roles largely parallel response trends between the two groups of respondents were apparent (Fund Raiser, Government Liaison/Resource Stimulator, Labor Relations Specialist). For these three roles, differing perceptions of role importance related to institution type were revealed and those differences were aligned closely in both groups of leaders. For the seven additional roles where significant differences among the same respondent group were noted, catagorized by institution type, those differences were

not paralleled in the other respondent group. This limited analysis of institution size and type as variables seems to indicate that institution type is more related to differences in perceived presidential role importance by the two respondent groups than is institution size.

Insert Table 4 here

Relative Role Importance: "Inside" and "Outside" Dimensions

Through manipulations of the data, a new variable (or "score") was created which was composed of the sum of all presidents' role importance ratings for the ten presidential roles defining the "inside" dimension. A second new variable (or "score") was created in the same manner, composed of the sum of all presidents' role importance ratings for the ten presidential roles defining the "outside" dimension. Role importance ratings for all board chairpersons were similarly combined to form two additional variables (or "scores") which defined the importance ratings trustees assigned to the "inside" and "outside" dimensions of the president's job.

Statistical analysis included the computation of t tests (for correlated samples) on all combinations of the four new "scores" to determine if the perceived importance of the two dimensions differed within and/or between the two respondent groups. A significant t

value indicated that the assigned value mean, or scores, were significantly different. The magnitude of the "scores" indicated the importance preferences (1 = very important, 5 = very unimportant). Listwise deletion of data was employed.

The pairings of mean scores on the new role dimension variables (shown in Table 5) indicate each respondent group perceived the dimensions to be significantly different, within and between respondent groups. They also agreed which of the two role dimensions was most important: the inside dimension.

Insert Table 5 here

Findings Based on Unstructured Responses

Although only 18 percent of the presidents and 28 percent of the board chairpersons who completed questionnaires also provided additional, unstructured written comments, these comments were very helpful in interpretating the quantitative data. A content analysis of these comments revealed the following:

1. Both respondent groups seemed to perceive that the unique nature of their institutions--as defined by size, type, history, etc.--was critical to determining presidential role priorities. As noted, the quantitative data supported this perception somewhat relative to institution type but less so related to institution size.

2. There seemed to be a widely held view among both respondent groups that the president's job is an extraordinary one of great and varied responsibility which demands an extraordinary individual to perform it effectively.

3. Presidents in particular seemed to express great difficulty in establishing a priority among roles: they said all roles seemed very important and there appeared to be an assumption that it must be that way.

4. While presidents seemed to express a sense of accepting resignation to the burdens of their office, trustees implied more strongly a sense of the need for delegation and the need for presidents to make wise choices about where to invest limited time and energy among the many expectations and responsibilities of the position.

5. Some presidents expressed a frustrating tension between the reality of critical demographic and fiscal trends dominating their time, energy and priorities and the possibly more critical--but somehow less pragmatically urgent--need for academic renewal.

6. Many presidents and trustees from smaller, usually private institutions expressed a belief that most of the roles would probably be rated of higher importance by those institutions, as compared to larger colleges, because of fewer opportunities for delegation, the intimate nature of the smaller colleges and so forth. (Except for a limited number of roles, the analysis of the

quantitative data with regard to institution size contradicted this perception.)

7. There was a sense of frustration expressed, particularly among presidents, in rating some roles because various parts of the role descriptions were perceived as requiring quite different importance ratings. (Although respondents were directed through instructions in the instrument not to be too literal in interpretations of role descriptions, the comments may point to a weakness in the instrument.)

8. A similar problem with role descriptions was detected when respondents in some instances expressed difficulty in assigning importance values to roles where they felt a majority of specific tasks for those roles were delegated to others, generally vice presidents. But respondents tended to rate those roles as less important, a response intended to be elicited when the instrument was designed.

9. The role of "inspirational leader" or "symbol of personal integrity" seemed to be important to some respondents but not adequately represented in the Presidential Roles Profile--although the Visionary/Long Range Planner and Symbol/Ceremonial Official roles were intended to represent those expectations and activities.

10. Some respondents perceived the role of Administrator/ Executive as inadequately representing the function of supervision, direction and facilitation of the work of senior institution

officers. Although the role was intended to represent these activities, possibly the role description emphasized a 'paper-pusher' image not full intended.

11. A number of board chairpersons (both in the major study in Pennsylvania and pilot study in New Jersey) emphatically expressed gratitude for having had the opportunity to state their views on the subject through their inclusion in the study. (This suggested, very tentatively, that they may not have as great an opportunity to do so--and possibly little encouragement to do so at their own institutions--as they might like.)

DISCUSSION

The opinions expressed in the general literature for many years have implied that the academic presidency has become "unfit for human beings" and may be getting worse if our increasingly threatening trends and current headlines are to be believed. The data gathered by the present exploratory study tend to support that assertion.

The data--particularly the qualitative data--gathered in the study reported here seemed to imply that presidents, quite possibly unwittingly, may have become 'their own worst enemies' as they struggle to fulfill the awesome responsibilities of their positions. Presidents expressed a noble but possibly self-destructive attitude of accepting resignation to the burdens of their office, seemingly propelled by the assumption that it simply must be this way and that

they must at least strive--largely on their own--to find the superhuman strength within themselves to rise to the demands of the position.

The presidents in this study seemed to believe it had to be them--rather than the job itself--that was the problem, if a problem existed regarding fulfilling expectations. Scattered unstructured comments from presidents who participated in this study also reinforced the general impression that many presidents are unwilling, unable or possibly fearful of enlisting the assistance of their governing boards in their personal struggles to be effective in the face of a multitude of often conflicting expectations and pressures.

The trend of the advice concerning working with trustees offered to presidents in the current opinion literature--often by former presidents--and in the unstructured comments gathered through this study focuses on the traditional recommendations. These recommendations usually suggest getting trustees involved in the life of the institution--but imply not getting them too involved; acclimating them to their trusteeship--but not too well; lest they come to believe that they have the privilege--even the responsibility--of offering substantive input, possibly even, on occasion, including questioning, revising or disapproving presidential recommendations.

The qualitative data gathered during the present study suggest

that trustees might be willing, indeed quite grateful in some cases, if given the opportunity to participate more fully with the president in redefining the expectations for the office and redesigning the job so that the incumbent might at least have a fighting chance at being successful. Certainly some trustees would first need to be made more aware of the fine line between reasonable and productive supervision, advice, and assessment, and counterproductive, intolerable interference with the work of the chief executive. Other trustees would have to be convinced that the president's job in indeed overwhelming and that part of their responsibility is to assist the president in setting reasonable and attainable goals. But the tone of the comments from the trustees who participated in this study generally implied a sympathetic cognizance of the burdens of the office, the need for delegation and the need for the president to make wise choices about where to first invest his or her time and energy in tune with the institution's most pressing needs.

The irony, yet promise of hope, suggested by the analysis of the quantitative data accumulated during this study is its major finding: presidents and board chairpersons (at least in Pennsylvania) are in close agreement about the relative importance of the many roles presidents are expected to fulfill. There seems to be reason to believe that if presidents and trustees were able to develop techniques for working more closely together to jointly

determine priorities for presidential tasks, within an environment of trust and improved understanding, they would be generally in close accord as to the relative importance of those tasks and functions. This finding may address one of the fears presidents may have about greater trustee involvement in presidential activity and priority setting. More importantly, the stressful solitude (or more optimistically, "splendid agony") of the president's struggle to discharge the extraordinary responsibilities of his or her office could be shared and possibly relieved.

Other findings of the present study include a tendency for presidents and board chairpersons to be in closer agreement about lower rated roles and not as strongly in agreement about the importance of higher rated roles. Although a tentative conclusion at best, while there may be overall agreement on the relative importance of the roles, there may be potential for disagreement in some key areas of presidential responsibility. Boards and presidents need to be aware of this tendency and to deal with it forthrightly.

The clear preference exhibited by both presidents and board chairpersons was for the "inside" role dimension. This suggests that, although much has been written about presidents becoming more involved with institutional advancement directed toward a variety of "outside" constituencies, both groups of leaders were in agreement that the internal responsibilities are of greater importance. The

implications of this finding are limited by its lack of historical context: similar studies for earlier periods are not available for comparison.

The results also suggest that institution type may have a more significant bearing on differences in perceived role importance than does institution size. The lack of an analysis of the interactive effect of these variables as well as the problematic sampling in this study limits the validity of this assertion. If it is a valid observation, search and selection committees and presidential candidates would want to be aware of the differences in role importance among different types of institutions and employ that information in matching candidates to appropriate institutions.

Finally, the Presidential Role Profile developed through this research effort may be of use to individual boards and presidents to facilitate the improvement of their relationship and the process of reaching consensus upon presidential expectations. As a tool for measuring perceived role importance, a president and his or her board might complete separately a version of the Profile and use a comparison of their responses as a stimulus for initiating discussion about presidential performance and goal setting.

Future Research

Given the preliminary indications that institution type may be a critical variable impacting the relative importance of the array of presidential roles, additional research might be fruitful in

clarifying this issue. Sample sizes which would allow for measuring the interactive effect of the variables of institution size and type would further contribute to an understanding of their relatedness to priority setting among presidential roles.

Certainly other research methodologies, such as Mintzberg's use of structured observation, should be undertaken and applied to the academic presidency. There is also a clear need for compiling and organizing the results of the few empirical studies concerning the academic presidency. Such a study would make a valuable contribution to directing the design and focus of future studies of the nature, function, and frustrations inherent to the academic presidency.

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Table 1

Summary of Responses for All Presidents and All Board Chairpersons in Order of Presidents' Ranked Mean Responses

Presidential Role/ Role Dimension[a]	Pairs N	Presidents Mean[b]	Presidents Rank	Board Chairpersons Mean[b]	Board Chairpersons Rank	r	p
(I) Visionary	107	1.30	1	1.36	1	.02	.850
(I) Trustee Rapport Builder/Advisor	107	1.32	2	1.58	3	.18	.058
(O) P.R. Specialist/ Image Builder	106	1.43	3	1.52	2	.13	.181
(O) Fund Raiser	107	1.50	4	1.59	4	.47**	.000
(I) Financial Manager	107	1.54	5	1.75	6	.13	.188
(I) Administrator/ Executive	107	1.79	6	1.60	5	.09	.344
(I) Consensus Builder/ Mediator	107	1.89	7	2.05	7	.15	.114
(O) Marketer/ Salesperson	106	2.15	8	2.14	9	.03	.765
(I) Faculty Advocate	107	2.22	9	2.09	8	-.17	.087
(O) Educational Advocate	107	2.24	10	2.39	12	.15	.121
(O) Symbol/Ceremonial Official	107	2.25	11	2.35	11	.02	.852
(I) Academic Planner/ Innovator	107	2.27	12	2.22	10	.04	.685
(O) Community Leader	106	2.35	13	2.76	17	.38**	.000
(O) Government Liaison/ Resource Stimulator	107	2.51	14	2.56	15	.37**	.000
(O) Interinstitutional Diplomat	107	2.62	15	2.50	14	.14	.145

Table 1 (continued)

Presidential Role/ Role Dimension[a]	Pairs N	Presidents Mean[b]	Presidents Rank	Board Chairpersons Mean[b]	Board Chairpersons Rank	r	p
(I) Student Liaison/ Mentor	107	2.67	16	2.66	16	.12	.221
(O) Alumni Liaison/ Motivator	107	2.54	17	2.48	13	.13	.198
(I) Physical Plant/ Property Overseer	106	2.98	18	3.14	19	.29**	.003
(O) Scholar/Teacher	107	3.29	19	3.48	20	.08	.406
(I) Labor Relations Specialist	105	3.42	20	3.06	18	.34**	.000
						r_s	.000
						.96**	

** $p < .01$

[a] I = "inside" roles, O = "outside"

[b] value of 1 = very important, 5 = very unimportant

Table 2

Summary of Significant t tests Indicating Differences in Presidents' and Board Chairpersons' Perceptions of the Degree of Importance of Individual Presidential Roles

Presidential Role/ Rank[a]	Group	N(Pairs)	Mean[b]	S.D.	t	p
Trustee Rapport Builder/Advisor(2)	Presidents Board Ch.	107	1.32 1.58	.62 .77	-3.03**	.003
Financial Manager(5)	Presidents Board Ch.	107	1.54 1.75	.80 .79	-2.02*	.046
Community Leader(13)	Presidents Board Ch.	106	2.35 2.76	1.12 1.06	-3.35**	.001
Labor Relations Specialist(20)	Presidents Board Ch.	105	3.42 3.06	1.22 1.06	2.83**	.006

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

[a] roles listed in order of presidents' ranked mean responses

[b] value of 1 = very important, 5 = very unimportant

Table 3

Summary of Significant Correlation Coefficients Indicating Presidents' and Board Chairpersons' Perceptions of Individual Role Importance Correlated with Institution Size

Presidential Role/ Rank[a]	Presidents N	Presidents Mean[b]	Presidents r	Presidents p	Board Chairpersons N	Board Chairpersons Mean	Board Chairpersons r	Board Chairpersons p
Administrator/ Executive (6)	119	1.75	.03	.767	115	1.62	.33**	.000
Consensus Builder/ Mediator (7)	119	1.87	-.09	.313	115	2.03	.18*	.050
Faculty Advocate (9)	119	2.20	-.19*	.042	115	2.13	-.03	.736
Educational Advocate (10)	119	2.22	-.22*	.016	115	2.38	-.28**	.003
Community Leader (13)	118	2.36	-.01	.899	115	2.76	-.25**	.007
Government Liaison/ Resource Stimulator (14)	119	2.54	-.19*	.038	115	2.54	-.24**	.010

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

[a] roles are listed in order of presidents' ranked mean responses

[b] value of 1 = very important, 5 = very important

Table 4

Summary of Significant F Values and Post Hoc Comparisons Indicating Differences in Perceived Role Importance Based on Institution Type

Presidential Role/Rank[a]	Presidents		Board Chairpersons	
	F	Post Hoc (VI< >VU)[b,c]	F	Post Hoc (VI< >VU)[b,c]
Visionary (1)	3.19**	2,6,3,5,1,4 (n.s.)	.28	
Trustee Rapport Builder/Advisor (2)	.69		2.53*	2,1,3,5,4, ≠ 6
Fund Raiser (4)	9.08**	5 ≠ 1,4	4.78**	3 ≠ 1
Educational Advocate (9)	2.19		6.38	2,4,1,5 ≠ 6,3
Alumni Lisison/ Motivator (14)	2.77*	1,3 ≠ 4	1.93	
Government Liaison/ Resource Stimulator (15)	4.99**	2,4,1,3,5,6(n.s.)	8.35**	2,4,1,3 ≠ 5,6
Interinstitutional Diplomat (16)	1.00		2.96*	2,4,1,5,6,3(n.s.)
Student Liaison/ Mentor (17)	2.44*	2,1,3,5,6,4(n.s.)	1.75	

Table 4 (continued)

Presidential Role/Rank[a]	Presidents F	Presidents Post Hoc (VI< >VU)[b,c]	Board Chairpersons F	Board Chairpersons Post Hoc (VI< >VU)[b,c]
Physical Plant/ Property Overseer (18)	4.03**	6 ≠ 1,5,4	.81	
Labor Relations Specialist	8.26**	1 ≠ 3,5,6	2.88*	1 ≠ 3

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

a roles listed in order of presidents' ranked mean responses

b VI = very important, VU = very unimportant

c 1 = state "owned" (14), 2 = State-related (4), 3 = state-aided (12), 4 = public community colleges (14), 5 = private 4 yr. institutions (76), 6 = private junior colleges (9)

Table 5

Summary of t Values Indicating Differences Within the Two Respondent Groups Relative to Inside and Outside Role Dimensions

Role Dimension	Group	N(Pairs)	M[c]	S.D	t	p
Within Groups						
Inside[a]	Presidents	101	21.56	4.34	2.95**	.004
Outside[b]	Presidents		22.93	5.20		
Inside	Board Ch.	101	21.57	4.16	4.54**	.000
Outside	Board Ch.		23.76	5.31		
Between Groups						
Inside	Presidents	101	21.56	4.34	.02	.986
Inside	Board Ch.		21.57	4.16		
Outside	Presidents	101	22.93	5.20	1.21	.229
Outside	Board Ch.		23.76	5.31		
Inside	Presidents	101	21.56	4.34	3.30**	.001
Outside	Board Ch.		23.76	5.31		
Outside	Presidents	101	22.93	5.20	2.13**	.036
Inside	Board Ch.		21.57	4.16		

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

[a]Inside dimension includes: Visionary, Trustee Rapport Builder/Advisor, Financial Manager, Administrator/Executive, Consensus Builder/Mediator, Faculty Advocate, Academic Planner/Innovator, Student Liaison/Mentor, Physical Plant/Property Overseer, Labor Relations Specialist

[b]Outside dimension includes: P.R. Specialist/Image Builder, Fund Raiser, Educational Advocate, Marketer/Salesperson, Symbol/Ceremonial Official, Community Leader, Alumni Liaison/Motivator, Government Liaison/Resource Stimulator, Interinstitutional Diplomat, Scholar/Teacher

[c]value mean may be determined by dividing mean by ten